

A sampling of Josephus' (*War*) description of some of the horrors associated with the Roman siege of Jerusalem, corresponding with Jesus'/Mark's description of¹: "For there will be greater anguish in those days than at any time since God created the world. And it will never be so great again. In fact, unless the Lord shortens that time of calamity, not a single person will survive. But for the sake of his chosen ones he has shortened those days. Then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the Messiah,' or 'There he is,' don't believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. Watch out! I have warned you about this ahead of time!" (Mark 13:19-23).

"People gave all their wealth for a little measure of wheat, and hid to eat it hastily and in secret so it would not be taken from them. Wives would snatch the food from their husbands, children from fathers, and mothers from the very mouths of infants...many were put to death...the sufferings of the people were so fearful that they can hardly be told, and no other city ever endured such miseries. Not since the world began was there ever a generation more prolific in crime than this bastard scum of the nation who destroyed the city...countless thousands of Jews died of hunger...gaping with hunger, the outlaws prowled around like mad dogs, gnawing at anything: belts, shoes, and even the leather from their shields, and then there was the incredible horror of Mary of Bethzuba...(she cooked and ate her own baby)..."this, the climax of Jewish tragedy for the world"...the whole city rocked with this abomination, while the Romans were horrified, and Caesar [Titus] declared himself innocent of this crime and swore to bury this atrocity of infant cannibalism beneath the ruins of the country...for on every side was slaughter and flight, civilians being butchered the most. Around the altar were heaps of corpses, while streams of blood flowed down the steps of the sanctuary...While the temple was in flames, the victors stole everything they could lay their hands on, and slaughtered all who were caught. No pity was shown to age or rank, old men or children, the laity or priests—all were massacred. As the flames roared up, and since the temple stood on a hill, it seemed as if the whole city were ablaze. The noise was deafening, with war cries of the legions, howls of the rebels surrounded by fire and sword, and the shrieks of the people. The ground was hidden by corpses, and the soldiers had to climb over heaps of bodies in pursuit of the fugitives...The Romans now set fire to all the surrounding buildings...6000 women and children hid in the remains of a portico in the temple. They had gathered there because of a false prophet, who had told them that God commanded them to go to the temple where they would receive guarantees of deliverance...the soldiers set fire to the colonnade, and not a soul escaped. Numerous false prophets deluded the people at this time...

¹ According to the chapter outline we have been following, namely, the destruction of the temple (and Jerusalem).